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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [ENRG](#) [TI](#)

SUBJECT: TAJIKISTAN - POWER SUPPLIES FROM TURKMENISTAN RESUME, POWER
SITUATION STILL DIRE

REF: DUSHANBE 224

11. (SBU) On February 27 electricity from Turkmenistan resumed flowing to Tajikistan via Uzbekistan. Barqi Tojik lifted electricity rationing in Dushanbe, which had been instituted since January 27 in many parts of the city. Rationing in the provinces continues. Barqi Tojik sources told news media that Uzbekistan would supply 100 million kilowatt hours (KWH) of electricity to Tajikistan in March. Foreign Minister Zarifi had told Ambassador that power supplies would resume via Uzbekistan within ten days following the successful Tajik-Uzbek intergovernmental commission meeting on February 20 (reftel).

12. (U) According to an agreement with Turkmenistan, it was to supply 1.2 billion KWH of electricity to Tajikistan during the autumn and winter of 2008-2009. In November and December 2008 Turkmenistan delivered 400 million KWH of electricity to Tajikistan. However, in early January Uzbekistan interrupted Turkmen electricity supplies to Tajikistan, blaming the interruption on a malfunction at the Uzbek Qaraqul substation.

13. (U) Observers in Tajikistan note that during the bitter winter of 2008, when Uzbekistan experienced severe cold no less than did Tajikistan, Tajikistan still received energy from or via Uzbekistan, although in very small amounts. This winter has been much warmer, with attendant lower energy demands, but Uzbekistan cut off energy supplies from or through its territory from January 1, 2009. In spite of many requests from the Tajik side to inspect and assist at the supposedly faulty sub-station in Uzbekistan, the Uzbeks did not allow Tajik specialists in.

14. (U) At present the energy situation in Tajikistan is still critical. Dushanbe is the only city receiving round-the-clock energy supplies. The rest of the country has seen little or no improvement. Tajikistan's main source of power, the Nurek reservoir, is only a meter above the cutoff point, and water inflow to the reservoir is barely sufficient to supply the Tajik Aluminum Company plant. It will be another month or two, depending on the weather, before inflow is sufficient to raise Nurek's level and allow high production there. Dependence on Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan continues until then.

15. (SBU) Comment: The Tajik-Uzbek rapprochement noted in reftel seems to be holding, as the resumption of power supplies shows. Tajikistan is also holding to its determination to build the Rogun dam, the main point of contention with Uzbekistan. With Rogun years away from operation, and seasonal dependence on Uzbekistan sure to continue, expect more power cutoffs next winter. End comment.

JACOBSON